



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Regional Partnership Councils February 2009 Report

Regional Partnership Council Appointments: A total of 311 Regional Council seats are filled. There were two resignations in January. Two individuals are being recommended to the Board for appointment for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Council.

Regional Funding Plans: The Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council will present their funding plan to the Board for approval. The full funding plan and summary sheet were provided in the board book. Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Southeast Maricopa Regional Councils submitted their strategies that required further development to the Board for approval. A summary sheet and revised strategy were included in the board book for each of the Regional Councils. Staff recommends that the Board approve the revised strategies.

FTF staff continues their work to develop RFGAs for funding plan strategies, with emphasis on cross regional coordination and alignment. Strategies under Family Support, Early Literacy, Health Professionals Incentives, Non-TEACH Early Care and Education Scholarships, (Physical Health, and all regionally funded statewide initiatives (Quality First, TEACH, Child Care Health Consultation, and Parent Kits) total \$50.6M and are on track to complete the RFGA or other contractual process by May 2009 so these awards may be considered at the Board Meeting on June 9-10, 2009.

Workgroups for Access and Affordability of Early Care and Education, Professional Development for Early Care and Education (including community-based training, mentoring/coaching, and unregulated family child care homes), and Screening and Preventative Healthcare have begun their work and will complete it in the next month. These particular strategies have significant policy implications as we begin to build the appropriate infrastructure to access a large number of children and care providers effectively and efficiently. Compounding the examination of current policy and program practices, as well as development of new policies, is the current state budget climate and the impacts of severe cuts or elimination of existing programs and services for children and families. Strategy workgroups are considering the following:

Access and Affordability – the variety of Regional Council approaches to address access and affordability at a local level; the impact of these approaches in relationship to reduced funding streams and any other changes in child care subsidy, market rate, the Early Childhood Block Grant, and Head Start; impact of Quality First resources; and, contribution of local strategies to the continued development of the high quality early care and education system.

Screening and Preventative Healthcare – preventing duplication of established screening activities within communities; ensuring screening activities are comprehensive and conducted by organizations and individuals with the appropriate credentials and in accordance with established standards, equipment and screening tools; reaching populations without current access to screening; and, coordinating screening to other health and treatment services so screening is not a “stand alone” activity.

Professional Development (community-based training, mentoring/coaching, and unregulated family child care homes) – compliance with licensing requirements for teachers and directors; enhancing skills in specialized areas, such as infant/toddler care or children with special needs; quality standards and accountability; definition of the role of community-based training and formal education and how they work together within the broader early care and education professional development system; effective coordination between providers of formal education and community-based training to assure that content is well-aligned and provides the core knowledge and skills necessary to support children’s learning and development; encouraging continuous educational advancement; smooth transitions between educational levels and higher education institutions, and how to increase unregulated providers’ participation.

These strategies cumulatively total \$32.5M and are on track for consideration by the Board at a July or early August 2009 Board meeting. As the strategy workgroups are meeting, policy issues will be brought forward to the Program Committee of the Board.

The Regional Division is working with Finance to prepare for releasing the funding early should we be granted emergency authority for Regional Partnership Councils and the Board to award regional funds immediately, rather than as of July 1, 2009, for those recommendations that are determined to be critical health, welfare and safety needs of young children.

Award Presentations: We are planning a series of events across the state to present awards to all 31 Regional Partnership Councils. A key message around these events is that in tough economic times we can not lose sight of our most valuable asset, our children. The following dates have been scheduled and as the locations, times and details are confirmed, information will be sent out.

February 20th

10:30-12:30: Yuma (award presentation for Yuma and Cocopah Regional Councils as part of legislative town hall that is scheduled)

4:30 Kingman (Award Presentation for LaPaz/Mohave Regional Council)

March 2nd

Morning: Casa Grande (Award presentation for Pinal and Gila River Regional Partnership Councils)

Noon: Globe (Award presentation for Gila and San Carlos Regional Councils)

Afternoon: Safford (Award presentation for Graham/Greenlee Regional Council)

March 3rd

9am: Window Rock (Award presentation for Navajo Nation Regional Council)

March 4th

Morning: Salt River (Award presentation for Salt River Indian Community)

Noon: Chandler (Award presentation for Central Maricopa Regional Council)

Afternoon: Mesa (Award presentation for Southeast Maricopa Regional Council)

March 6th

Morning: Sierra Vista (Award presentation for Cochise Regional Council)

Noon: Nogales (Award presentation for Santa Cruz Regional Council)

March 9th

Morning: Yavapai (Award presentation for Yavapai Regional Council)

Noon: Flagstaff (Award presentation for Coconino Regional Council)

Late Afternoon: Show Low (Award presentation for Navajo/Apache and White Mountain Regional Councils)

March 10th

Morning: Parker (Award presentation for Colorado River Indian Tribes Regional Council and repeat for LaPaz/Mohave Regional Council)

March 11th

Morning: Location TBD (Award presentation for Northwest Maricopa Regional Council)

Noon: Location TBD (Award presentation for Southwest Maricopa Regional Council)

Afternoon: South Phoenix (Award presentation for South Phoenix Regional Council)

March 12th

Morning: Location TBD (Presentation of check to Northeast Maricopa Regional Council)

Noon: North Phoenix (Presentation of check to North Phoenix Regional Council)

Afternoon: Central Phoenix (presentation of check to Central Phoenix Regional Council)

March 16th

Morning: Pima (Award presentation for Pima Regional Councils)

Noon: Pascua Yaqui (Award presentation for Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Council)

Afternoon: Tohono O'odham (Award presentation for Tohono O'odham Nation Regional Council)